International Sunday School Lessons.

BY REV. FRED B. HARGREAVES.

Lesson 2. *April 11th.*

THE FIRST DISCIPLES.

John i. 35-51. Golden Text, John i. 35. Time, A. D. 27. Place, Bethabara, a ford of the river Jordan. Rulers, Tiberius, emperor of Rome; Pontius Pilate, procuator of Judea, Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee.

It is a strange and weird scene! By the Bethabara ford of the Jordan is gathered a vast company of people. It was a historic place. Here Gideon lay in wait for the Midianites, and here the men of Gilead slew the Ephraimites. It was a place which had been the theatre of many exciting events, but which made so distinct an impression upon the world as the one narrated in our lesson. What meant this strange, motley gathering of people, of every class and character? What were they doing at Bathabara ford? They had come down to hear a preacher who was the greatest evangelist of his age; a man who stamped his impress upon the times in which he lived. It was John the Baptist. He was a man of remarkable appearance. Stern of feature, strong of figure, quaint of dress, he appeared before the people. His hermit life and great sanctity were known: and when he came forth from his seclusion and began preaching his wonderful message, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," he roused the country to prepare for the coming of Christ. It was noised abroad; every traveler as he heard the news told it to others, and so they soon began flocking from all quarters to hear the preaching of John the Baptist. He was a revivalist indeed. At first the gathering was only local, but soon the whole nation was interested. Men left their work. There was represented there every class in the land, high and low, good and bad, native and foreign, military and civil, priestly and lay, all kinds of people were there. Amongst them was a young man named John, a Jerusalem trader, whose home was on the shores of Galilee, and a man named Andrew, who were intensely interested in the preaching of the Baptist. A deputation of priest and Levites went down from Jerusalem to enquire into the proceedings, as the Jerusalem authorities claimed to be the sole dispensers of religious instruction. Was he the Christ? or Elias? or the expected prophet? "He was only the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias."

A man fair of form, stepped down to the river bank, picking his way amongst the crowd, now brushing past a Roman soldier and then carefully threading his way through a crowd of merchants who had left their business to attend the great revival. John saw him coming and he cried out, "There standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who cometh after me is prefered before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." The eager, restless crowd turned upon each other, and the anxious enquiry was passed from mouth to mouth, "Where is he? Who is he?" Each one doubtless expected some one to step forward and declare himself to be the one referred to. The people had long expected the Messiah, whom they hoped would be a great military leader, and under whose generalship they would win back their freedom from the power of Rome. But no one manifested himself that day. It was two days after this that John looked upon Jesus as he walked, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God." Then the two disciples of the Baptist, named John and Andrew, followed Jesus, and in response to his question, "What seek ye," they replied, "Master, where dwellest thou." He answered them, "Come and see." They went with Him, and they became His disciples and afterward linked their fortunes with His for time and eternity. Then Andrew went out and found his brother Simon, and told him the news, "We have found the Christ"—"and he brought him to Jesus." The next day Jesus went out and found Philip to whom He said, "Follow me." At once imbued with the same spirit which had actuated Andrew the day before, he went out and found Nathaniel, and told *him* the news, "We have found Jesus of Nazareth." Nathaniel knew well the reputation of Nazareth and he immediately enquired, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip did not argue the matter with him; but simply said, "Come and see." Nathaniel went, he saw, he believed, and he followed Jesus. So, to each unbelieving one we would echo the words of Andrew and Philip "Come and see." And if you thus come with true heart and purpose, this same Jesus will speak away the sin from your soul, and to it He will gently whisper, "Peace; go in peace and sin no more."

LESSON THOUGHTS.

1. John testified of Christ; let us do likewise.

2 If we would *know* Christ we must *come* to Him. Come and see."

3 Tell the good news of salvation to your family and friends.

4. Jesus never turns away the earnest seeker—the seeker becomes a disciple.

The Harmonious Book.

We believe in the Scriptures as the word of God because of their structure and interior harmony. The Bible occupied well on toward two thousand years in the course of its composition; is made up of more than sixty distinct parts, contributed by as many as forty separate authors. These authors were drawn from every social condition—kings, courtiers, shepherds, fishermen—and marked by every degree of mental attainment and endowment. Each author develops his own theme, preserves his own idiosyncrasy, occupies his own standpoint, uses his own terms and phrases, employs his own grammatical constructions, enriches his composition with his own distinct graces of style, and stands before us in all his own rich and untrammeled individuality. And yet, writing at such intervals of time as to forbid conspiracy and collusion, the result of their work is not many books, but one book, a book so intensely one as to receive from us the designation, The Book. The Bible is, in all its parts, one in its aims, one in its principles, one in its characterizations of God and man. It writes in history and prophecy, and yet enunciates the same truths; in prose and in verse, but inculcates the same lessons; is lyric and didatic, but falls into no contradictions. We have only to realize the ease with which men fall into differences of opinion regarding the nearest and most commonplace matters, to appreciate how much is denoted by the harmony of Scripture writers in matters most reticent and profound.

This accord of high idea running through a period of twenty centuries requires something for its explanation. There is nothing like it elsewhere. When an orchestra of forty musicians playing each his own special instrument, rendering, each of them, notes that are unlike those of any other player, and set the whole orchestra producing associate effects sees distinction is their harmony and unity, who infer that somewhere some one mind has worked governingly upon these forty musicians, that they have severally taken their direction from him, drawn their impulses from him. We cannot think of a harmonious result without thinking of one master-mind as its ground.

When we see forty masons engaged in putting up a building, each covering a small space of wall, and the structure daily growing under their hands into a finer and more meaningful perfection of form and serviceableness, it is an easy inference that some one mind in a comprehensive way covers the entire ground which each of these forty traverses in narrow detail. And still more impressive does the sovereignty of the master-mind over the workmen become, when as in the instance of certain continental cathedrals, the structure has been built slowly up through centuries, and one controlling genius swept the entire interval of five hundred years, from foundation to finial.

And if the orchestral rendering presupposes behind it one creative mind that wrought the oratorio; and if the cathedral at Cologne, that oratorio in stone, implies the workings of a single genius, drawing walls and towers and spires into ripening grace and proportion, along the tired process of the centuries, will not the Holy Word, that finest music of the heart, that subiimest temple of thought require for its composition the presidency of a single Genius, able to impress with His own thought, and inspire with His own mind, every workman that wrought upon it?—C. H. PARKHURST.

The Founding of Snowhill.

Snowhill, more commonly called the Nunnery, is located near Quincy in the Southern portion of Franklin Co., Pa. And since the people have many questions to ask, concerning the place, I have been led to think it would be just as well once in a while to answer some of these questions in public print, from which the people could judge of the correctness of what they may have heard said.

It is not true that the State donated any lands whatever to the seven-dayers for church purposes. The patent is at hand which shows, that a warrant was issued, dated 20th April 1763 to survey a certain tract of land called Snowhill. The custom of the land office being, to give every tract of land that was sold some particular name.

The question arises why was it necessary to have a tract of land patented a length of time after it was first bought. The late proprietaries—so called in the patent—were William Penn and others, who obtained a grant for the province of Pennsylvania from the British government and the State was under British government till 1776. Now it appears when William Penn and others, the late proprietaries, sold lands they reserved a certain percentage, which the purchaser could pay at some convenient time. The following is a correct copy of the patent, with the exception of the survey.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME.

Know ye, that in consideration of monies paid by Catherine Snowberger unto the late proprietaries; at the granting of the warrant herein after mentioned and of the sum of one hundred and nine dollars sixteen cents lawful money now paid by Andrew Snowberger into the receiver general's office of this commonwealth, there is granted by said commonwealth, unto the said Andrew Snowberger, a certain tract of land called Snowhill, situated in Washington Township, Franklin County.

Beginning at a post, (here follows the survey) ——Containing one hundred thirty acres, three quarters and allowance of six per cent. for roads, &c. [which said tract was surveyed in pursuance of the warrant dated 20th April 1763, granted to the said Catherine Snowberger whose right to the same by virtue of sundry conveyances and assurances in the law became vested in the said Andrew Snowberger] with the appurtenances. To have and to hold, the said tract or parcel of land, with appurtenances unto the said Andrew Snowberger and his heirs, to the use of him the said Andrew Snowberger his heirs and assigns forever free and and clear of all restrictions and reservations, as to mines, royalties, quit rents or otherwise, excepting and reserving only the fifth part of all gold and silver ore for the use of this commonwealth, to be delivered at the pit's mouth, clear of all charges. In witness whereof Thomas McKean governor of said commonwealth, hath hereunto set his hand and caused the State seal to be hereunto affixed, the eleventh day of May in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and three, and of the commonwealth the twenty-seventh.

Attest:

JAMES TRIMBLE,
Deputy Sec'ry.

Peter Lehman a preacher from Somerset Co., Pa., came to Snowhill in about 1795. In about 1800 arrangements were made to found an institution. In Jan. 1823 Lehman died aged 65 years. In December following, the property was transferred to a board of Trustees. Previous to that time Lehman and others had the management of the the place.

March 2, 1886. O. S.

The divinest attribute in the heart of God is love, and the mightiest, because the most human principle in the heart of man is faith. Love is heaven; faith is that which appropriates heaven.—F. W. ROBERTSON.